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ABSTRACT

In May 1997, USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) launched the initiative, "Focus on Girls: An Evaluation of USAID Programs and Policies in Education." The effort included five Impact Evaluations, including this study in Guinea (Guatemala, Malawi, Nepal, and Pakistan were the others). This Impact Evaluation used four methods: (1) document review; (2) analysis of data provided by the Guinean Statistics and Planning Unit; (3) interviews with policy and program actors in Guinean education, from both the Guinean government and donor agencies; and (4) observations, interviews, and focus group discussions with parents, teachers, and local administrators of four primary schools in Lelouma prefecture in Middle Guinea. Findings showed that Guinea has transformed its education system during the 1990s by restructuring the system to emphasize primary schooling, and by expanding school supply. The country's percentage of school-age girls enrolled in primary school rose from 17 percent in 1989 to 37 percent in 1997. Now growing at 16 percent annually, girls' educational participation in Guinea ranks first among African countries for sustained growth. Girls still lag behind boys in persistence and achievement. In 1997, only 57 percent of girls, versus 73 percent of boys reached the final year of primary school, and 33 percent of girls who sat for the seventh-grade entry exam passed, compared with 44 percent of boys. The study's detailed findings included these lessons: (1) basic education reform, coupled with girl-specific policies and programs, is a powerful strategy for improving girls' educational participation; (2) a unified message and activist leadership are critical to increasing girls' education; (3) baseline assessment and analysis are requirements for gender-aware policy and program design; (4) a coherent education policy and investment framework must be applied to girls' education initiatives; (5) change is local; (6) a hybrid of conditionality and "projectized" support was effective in putting girls' education on the agenda; (7) sustained, integrated support is necessary to

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consolidate the early efforts of Guinea's Ministry of Pre- University Education (MEPU) in girls' education; and (8) simultaneous efforts to improve quality and enhance quantity are needed. (EV)

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CDIE

Impact Evaluation

United States Agency for International Development

PROMOTING PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR GIRLS IN GUINEA

A decade ago, only 17 percent of Guinean girls of primary-school age attended school. With USAID support, Guinea has raised girls' enrollments to nearly 40 percent. But the education program has yet to address some constraints, such as poverty and parents' need for daughters' household labor, in any sustainable way.

SUMMARY

THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA has transformed its education system during the 1990s. By restructuring the system to emphasize primary schooling and expand school supply, Guinea's government has taken the fundamental step to providing schooling to the long-neglected majority of its children, especially girls. The country's percentage of school-age girls enrolled in primary school rose from 17 percent in 1989 to 37 percent in 1997. Now growing at 16 percent annually, girls' educational participation in Guinea ranks first among African countries for sustained growth. Gender disparity (while still acute) is diminishing, as girls' enrollments grow faster than boys'. But girls still lag behind boys in persistence and achievement. In 1997, only 57 percent of girls versus 73 percent of boys reached the final year of primary school, and 33 percent of girls who sat for the seventh grade entry exam passed, compared with 44 percent of boys.

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Guinea's reform program has also resuscitated demand for schooling in a country where enrollments had recently been declining. Notably, this demand includes schooling for girls, owing in large part to activity spurred by the former education minister and an awareness campaign carried out by the Ministry of Pre-University Education (better known by its French acronym, MEPU). Highly visible policy and institutional changes (such as latrines, female teachers, and a liberalized pregnancy policy) have signaled parents that their daughters are welcome in school. They also have reduced some obstacles to girls' educational participation. The Equity Committee, an institutional mechanism MEPU established to launch its girls' education initiative, has attracted attention to and increased knowledge about girls' participation, although its initiatives have remained outside the mainstream of MEPU operations.

USAID has played a leading role in supporting these changes. A major donor to the education reform effort, the Agency provided budgetary and technical support in areas essential to reforming the education system: policy, financial management, and planning and information systems development. It introduced girls' education to the Guinean government's agenda, as well as to other donors' agendas, creating a climate of support for girls' education through careful use of performance conditions, technical assistance, and project support for training and nonroutine activities, such as research studies and the awareness campaign. USAID helped MEPU build the necessary head of steam to drive the ministry's efforts to improve girls' education.

The Guinean government now faces three major challenges to advancing girls' education: 1) responding to the demand created by the awareness campaign, 2) coordinating the donors who wish to participate in Guinea's successful reform effort, and 3) tailoring its traditional schooling model to better respond to the needs of girls and other vulnerable groups of children by integrating these considerations into mainstream educational services, rather than by emphasizing special projects. The government also must concentrate more on the issue of school *quality* to improve efficiency and sustainability.

Guinea's experience demonstrates that a unified message delivered through activist national leadership, media, and local leadership—made concrete in new schools with visible policy changes—can go far in setting the stage for increasing girls' education. Basic education reform coupled with girl-specific policies and programs are powerful and effective tools for improving girls' participation.

USAID's 1990 education sector grant to the Guinean government was initiated under the congressionally mandated Development Fund for Africa. It was one of the first USAID programs to target primary education, to use the new education sector support approach aimed at advancing educational reform, and to focus on girls. As such, it became both emblematic of and a laboratory for USAID's evolving basic education in Africa in low-access countries. The strategy had two critical features: 1) improving the capacity of the education system to reach and teach all children, and 2) responding to the particular, often unique, needs of traditionally underserved or neglected populations—specifically girls and rural children.

Study Methodology

In May 1997, USAID's Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) launched Focus on Girls: An Evaluation of USAID Programs and Policies in Education. The effort

included five Impact Evaluations (Guatemala, Malawi, Nepal, and Pakistan were the others) to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of USAID policies and programs to improve girls' primary education. In December 1997 and January 1998, a two-person CDIE evaluation team spent two weeks in Guinea, collecting documentation and conducting interviews. Additional document reviews and interviews by researchers in the United States completed the data collection and analysis in late 1998.

This Impact Evaluation used four methods: 1) document review; 2) analysis of data provided by the Guinean Statistics and Planning Unit; 3) interviews with policy and program actors in Guinean education, from both the Guinean government and donor agencies; 4) and observations, interviews, and focus group discussions with parents, teachers, and local administrators of four primary schools in Lélouma prefecture, in Middle Guinea.

BACKGROUND

A former French colony, Guinea gained independence in 1958. Half its present-day population of 7.5 million is under age 18. Three quarters of the economically active population are engaged in agriculture. There are 16 ethnic groups in Guinea, with Fulani, Malinké, and Susu the largest. About 85 percent of the population is Muslim, with the remainder split among traditional religions and Christianity.

Despite a high percentage of arable land and substantial mineral resources, Guinea's indicators of economic and human resource development stand among the lowest in the world. With a life expectancy at birth of 44.5 years, an infant mortality rate of 144 per 1,000 live births, and gross domestic product per capita of $592, Guinea in 1995 ranked 168 of 174 countries on the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index.[1] The maternal mortality rate is extremely high at 880 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Literacy among women 15 or older is estimated at only 22 percent, compared with 50 percent for men.[2]

During the First Republic (1958–84) the Guinean people suffered under one of the world's most oppressive and abusive regimes. The statist, command economy fostered in this period under the leadership of Ahmed Sékou Touré contributed further to the population's misery. A 1984 revolution brought in the Second Republic and policy changes in all areas. A new constitution adopted in 1990 guaranteed social and political freedoms and laid the groundwork for the first presidential elections in 1993. Massive economic reforms were fostered through the Programme de Redressement National, or National Reform Program, begun in 1986 with financial support from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Structural adjustments have included liberalization of trade, restructuring of the government budget, privatization of banking and parastatal enterprises, and reduction and redeployment of civil servants. Ongoing macroeconomic reforms include measures to enhance revenue collection, to strengthen fiscal management, and to maximize public investments in human resource development and poverty-reduction measures.[3]

[1] World ranking and figures for life expectancy are 1997 data from the United Nations Development Program's *Human Development Report* (New York). Per capita GDP is 1996 data from UNDP.

[2] UNESCO. 1997. *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*. Paris.

[3] World Bank. *1995 Equity and School Improvement Project (Guinea): Staff Appraisal Report*. Washington.

Table 1. Status of the Education System in 1989

Problem	Magnitude	Causes Cited
Access Low access for all children High urban–rural disparity Wide gender gap	28% gross enrollment rate 23% gross access rate 54% urban gross enrollment rate 19% rural gross enrollment rate 40% boys' gross enrollment rate 17% girls' gross enrollment rate 19% girls' gross access rate	Lack of schools, teachers Lack of demand Resources directed to urban centers Preference given boys Girls' household labor Early marriage, bride price Fear of molestation, pregnancy Negative attitudes by community
Quality Low quality of instruction Wide gender gap	31% persistence to grade 6 57% grade 7 entry exam pass rate 34% boys' persistence 24% girls' persistence 60% boys' pass rate 49% girls' pass rate	Untrained or underqualified teachers Poor French skills Few instructional materials Poor treatment of girls in class Negative expectations of girls' performance Punitive pregnancy policy

Sources: Juárez and Associates (1998), *Case Study: Girls' Education Efforts in Guinea: Education Sector Reform and Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels (FQEL)*, Washington: USAID/Global Bureau/Women in Development Office; and Karen Tietjen, Joseph DeStefano, and Robert Prouty (1994), *FQEL Identification Project*, Conakry: USAID/Guinea.

Guinea's School System At the Outset of USAID's Education Program

Guinea's basic education system, at the inception of USAID's grant, had one of the lowest girls' enrollment rates and one of the highest gender gaps in the world. In 1989 the Guinean education system bore the scars of the Marxist-style education reform instituted under the First Republic. Schools were restructured to become centers of political orientation of a repressive regime. The primary school curriculum emphasized vocational training, content relevant for rural citizens, and classes in one of eight national languages rather than French. Students and teachers both were expected to perform so-called productive work in order to contribute to school operating expenses, with the result that teaching time was monopolized by work in school gardens or workshops. Often unpaid or unscrupulous school personnel would exact their wages in student labor, undermining parental confidence in the school and in schooling in general.

Despite promising reforms initiated by the government, by the end of the 1980s Guinea's education system ranked among the 10 least developed in the world. With the deterioration of the education system, the primary enrollment rate fell from 33 percent in 1979 to 29 percent in 1989. The first-grade intake rate of 23 percent was lower than the gross enrollment rate for all school-age children, indicating that the number of students entering school was in decline. Most parents were reluctant to enroll their children in schools of such poor quality that only 31 percent of

students who began school in 1984 reached the sixth grade in 1989. On average it took 10 years for a student to complete the primary cycle.[3]

The lack of access was most severe for girls and rural children, with gross enrollment rates less than 20 percent for each group. Most rural villages lacked schools, forcing young students to travel long distances (3 to 8 kilometers), which resulted in a wide disparity between urban (54 percent gross enrollment rate in 1988) and rural areas (18 percent).

Gender disparity was equally acute. The gross enrollment rate was 40 percent for boys and only 17 percent for girls. Not only did boys receive more favorable treatment in accessing school places and in the classroom, but also their academic careers and aspirations were met with more support in the community and in the household. Parents hesitated to invest in girls' schooling because of the generally low opinion of their scholastic abilities, the often poor return in terms of girls' performance and future employability, doubts about the relevance of a formal education to marriage prospects, and the high opportunity costs associated with sending their daughters to school—in terms of both sacrificing girls' labor and delaying marriage (with the associated bride-price benefits). Parents and the religious community were also concerned about girls' security, fearing molestation and pregnancy by school personnel or male classmates.[4]

Structural weaknesses in the education system and lack of a coherent education policy framework were made worse by severe underfunding and inequitable distribution of resources. In 1989, less than 13 percent of the budget was allocated to the education sector, compared with the average 16 percent for sub-Saharan Africa and 22 percent for Francophone West Africa. Although 77 percent of the Guinean education system's students were enrolled at the primary school, less than 25 percent of the public education budget was allocated to the primary level. Ninety-eight percent of the recurrent budget went to teachers' salaries. Nonsalary recurrent expenditure totaled less than 20 cents a student.

In the 1988–89 school year, 20,000 students were turned away in the city of Conakry alone because of lack of schools and insufficient classroom capacity. Urban centers (primarily Conakry) received the great majority of education resources. Where rural areas had schools, they were located with little reference to population distribution and typically had only one or two classrooms. The primary school teaching corps was both underqualified and insufficient in number. Many former primary school teachers had been deployed to secondary schools or administrative posts, and most clustered in urban areas. Of those who remained in the classroom, most lacked teaching credentials and training. They received little in-service training, inspection visits, supervision, and instructional materials, even when the government decided in 1984 to reinstitute French as the language of instruction.

Social, cultural, and economic factors, in addition to the poor state of education, weighed disproportionately on girls. But the government did little to redress the many disadvantages that girls labored under and in some cases sharpened them. New laws to discipline teachers accused of molesting girl students were not enforced. The government

[3] Pierre Kamano. 1996. *Formulating Education Policy: Lessons and Experiences From Sub-Saharan Africa.* Paris: Association for the Development of African Education.

[4] See Karen Tietjen (1992), *Orienting Report: Analysis of Barriers: Factors Influencing the Educational Participation of Girls and Rural Children in Guinea,* Washington: USAID; Lynellyn D. Long and Hawah Fofanah (1990), *Study of Girls' Access to Primary Schooling in Guinea,* Washington: USAID; and Passy Kourouma (1991), *Étude Portant Sur les Aspects Socio-culturels et Socio-économiques de la Scolarisation des Filles au Niveau Primaire,* Conakry: Government of Guinea.

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Box 1. PASE Priorities And Objectives

Increase first grade access rate to 60 percent, to achieve 53 percent primary school enrollment by 2000.

Increase education's share of the government budget, with the bulk of resources devoted to primary education.

Reduce rural–urban and gender disparities by increasing the numbers of classrooms and teachers available to them.

Increase teacher recruitment to keep pace with enrollment growth and to improve teacher training.

Strengthen Ministry of Education capacity, and decentralize management functions.

Examine secondary and higher levels of education in view of their relationship to the primary education objectives.

policy of dealing with pregnant schoolgirls was punitive. It not only expelled them from school during their pregnancy but also blocked them from reenrolling in the same locale if they had not married. Although most parents of girl students expressed a preference for female teachers and single-sex classes, the few female teachers were mostly clustered in urban areas. No special efforts were made to recruit more of them. Admission quotas for girls at all levels of education were eliminated, as were all other affirmative action policies, such as reduced performance standards for female students.* Other policies that may have fallen heavily on girls were the age cutoffs for first-grade admission and sitting for the seventh-grade exam, and the limited repetition policy.

BASIC EDUCATION REFORM: INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLING

Guinean Government Structural Adjustment Of Education Programs (PASE I and II)

After comprehensively reviewing its education system, the Guinean government in 1989 issued a Declaration of Education Policy, which established educational priorities and objectives aimed at rebuilding the system. The government directed its efforts and resources on primary education. This document served as the reference point for the creation of a multidonor, interministerial education reform program, the two-phase *Programme d'Ajustement Structural en Éducation*: PASE I (1990–95) and PASE II (1996–2000).

PASE I addressed two major goals. First, it sought to expand and redistribute the availability and accessibility of primary education, through school construction and augmented teaching capacity. Second, it aimed to improve personnel management, improve the budget and accounting system, revitalize the Education Ministry's ability to plan and manage the increased resources through administrative restructuring, and upgrade data collection, analysis, and use. USAID, the World Bank, and France's Cooperation and Assistance Fund provided primary external support to the education reform program through a combination of balance-of-payment supplements (used for debt repayment) and technical assistance. Total expenditures for primary education under PASE I were estimated at $205 million, with $131

*Many parents and administrators perceived admission quotas and lowered standards for girls as contributing to lowering the quality of education. Many considered it unfair, although several women leaders in Guinea today (including the former education minister) maintain that these measures enabled them to obtain the level of education they did.

million coming from the Guinean government and $74 million from donors: the World Bank ($20 million), USAID ($39.8 million), and the French ($12 million).*

PASE II was initiated in 1996 with the goal of enrolling 53 percent of the primary school–age population by the year 2000. It built on the precepts and accomplishments of PASE I, continuing to pursue expanded and more equitable access to primary education—but with greater emphasis on improving the *quality* of that education through better planning, services, and materials provided to schools and teachers.

Attention to girls' and rural children's needs was to be explicitly emphasized. The primary curricula were to be revised to emphasize basic competencies in math and reading and adapted to make the subjects more appropriate to local conditions and opportunities. A system of diagnostic testing was to be developed. Sector-management strengthening continued, with the development of a planning system based on the concept of school quality. The original three donors were joined by many others, chief among them the African Development Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Fonds Européen de Développement (a special fund under the European Union), the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, and UNICEF. Donors this time committed $125 million, with the World Bank contributing $42.5 million, USAID $20 million, and France's Cooperation and Assistance Fund $9.5 million. For its part, the Guinean government committed $23.8 million.†

USAID Education Sector Support Program

Since 1990, USAID has worked in partnership with the Guinean government, its Ministry of Pre-University Education, and other donors to implement PASE. The goal has been to "expand access to quality primary schooling, especially for girls and rural children." During 1990–97, its two main assistance vehicles to the sector were the Guinea Education Sector Reform project (ESRP) and the Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels (FQEL) project.

USAID and Basic Education Reform

The Education Sector Reform project (1990–96) pioneered the new education sector approach‡—aimed at supporting country-led education reform—using a combination of nonproject assistance worth $29.1 million and projectized assistance of $10.7 million, to provide both budgetary and technical support to the national educational reform effort. Performance conditions linked to nonproject assistance were used to articulate and endorse policy changes—or steps toward them—that were critical to systemic reform. These addressed support for girls' education, funds for school construction, integration of PASE management structures, increased and reallocated budgetary resources to favor primary education, and achievement of teacher training, retraining, and redeployment goals. USAID released nonproject assistance in four disbursements (three in the original design, with a fourth added for consolidation and bridging activities). The Guinean government met all of its performance conditions within the general time frame set by the grant agreement.

*"*Audit of USAID/Guinea's Education Sector Reform Project.* 1995. By Regional Inspector General for Audit. Dakar, 8 June.

†Juárez and Associates. 1998. *Case Study: Girls' Education Efforts in Guinea: Education Sector Reform and Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels.* Washington: USAID/Global Bureau/Women in Development Office.

‡See Joseph DeStefano, Ash Hartwell, and Karen Tietjen (1995), *Basic Education in Africa: USAID's Approach to Sustainable Reform in the 1990s*, Washington: USAID; and Hartwell, Tietjen, and Marcia Bernbaum (1998), *USAID Strategic Framework for Basic Education in Africa*, Washington: USAID.

Table 2. Guinean Government Education Reform Strategies

Strategies to Address	Supply-Side Constraints	Demand-Side Constraints
Access	**PASE I** • More resources to education • Resource reallocation to primary education • School construction with community cost-sharing • Teacher redeployment and retraining • Double shift/multigrade • Facilitate private school certification **PASE II** • Maintain/raise resource allocations • School construction • Increase teacher recruitment • Revise preservice training	**PASE I** School mapping/placement **PASE II** Community schools "Second chance" schools
Quality	**PASE I** • Increase nonsalary recurrent expenditure • Develop textbooks • Produce/distribute textbooks **PASE II** • Maintain unit resource levels • Revise curriculum • Revise materials • Distribute more textbooks • In-service teaching training • Teacher materials • Student learning assessment • School quality grants program	**PASE I** None **PASE II** Develop Associations of Parents of Students
Technical Capacity	**PASE I** • Create Pre-University Ministry of Education • Procurement systems • Budget/accounts system • Decentralize budget/management system • Personnel management system • Develop educational management information systems **PASE II** • Develop planning models • Create evaluation unit	Not applicable

Table 3. USAID Basic Education Support Program

Education Sector Reform Project		
Objective	**Nonproject Assistance Conditions**	**Project Assistance**
General Support Ministry of Education in improving educational quality to increase percentage of primary school–aged group	• Increase sectoral funding[a,q] • Increase primary subsector funding[a,q] • Increase nonsalary recurrent funding[q] • Incorporate PASE secretariat into MEPU[t] • Remove barriers to private school development[a] • Match school construction funds[a] • Redeploy and train teachers[a,q]	• Provide policy analysis[t] • Establish budget and accounting systems at central, regional, and district levels • Improve procurement system[t] • Improve data collection instruments, collection process, analysis, and use[t] • Provide participant training
Girls Ensure equitable access for girls and rural children	• Redeploy and train teachers consistent with USAID gender equity objectives[a,q] • Make school rehabilitation and construction consistent with USAID gender equity objectives[a] • Conduct study to determine factors influencing household decisions to enroll girls[a] • Develop plan to address constraints to girls' and rural children's enrollment[a] • Implement equity plan and develop national strategy to increase girls' and rural children's educational participation with targets[a,q]	• Develop action plan and strategy[t] • Train and orient Equity Committee[t] • Conduct demand study (household, school factors)[a,q] • Conduct publicity campaign[a]
Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels		
Objective	**Nonproject Assistance Conditions**	**Project Assistance**
General Provide quality education to a larger percentage of Guinean children	Not applicable	• Improve policy analysis/formulation[t] • Develop planning and data analysis model[t] • Improve budget and accounting systems[t] • Improve teacher support and training[q] • Improve instructional materials[q] • Develop policy dialog mechanisms[t] • Promote community participation[q]
Girls Emphasize specific programs that help girls and rural children	Not applicable	• Improve Equity Committee capacity[t] • Develop national (public and private) strategy and national working group • Expand private sector support (religious, business, community) for girls' education

[a]Activity intended to increase *access*.
[q]Activity intended to increase *quality*.
[t]Activity intended to increase *technical capacity*.

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Compared with the nonproject assistance, the amount of funds originally designated for the projectized component of the Education Sector Reform project ($4.7 million, with an additional $6 million for a two-year bridging activity) was slim. Two long-term advisers and a host of short-term technical assistants worked to strengthen MEPU policy development and planning capacity, to institutionalize financial management systems (at the central and regional levels), and to inform and assist MEPU efforts to support girls' education. PL 480 funds supplemented school construction and financed a girls' education publicity campaign. USAID advisers worked closely with the ministry's PASE technical secretariat, the Financial Management Unit, the Statistics and Planning Unit, and the Equity Committee.

In 1997, USAID support phased into the Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels activity, which broadened and deepened its earlier Education Sector Reform activities and increased emphasis on school and instructional quality. Using only project assistance funds ($20 million) to provide technical assistance and commodities,* the ongoing FQEL activity supports

- Improved sectoral strategic planning and decision-making
- Development of teacher support services and instructional materials to improve the quality of instruction
- Improved development, planning, and implementation of MEPU equity program and initiatives to increase educational participation for girls and rural children

USAID/Guinea opted to become one of the target countries of USAID's worldwide Girls' and Women's Education activity, using this mechanism to support the equity component of its program, including technical support to MEPU and work with the private sector.

*Use of nonproject assistance was suspended in 1994.

USAID and Girls' Education

Girls' education has been an integral part of USAID/Guinea's sector program. Advancing education reform in Guinea, with its emphasis on primary education, is seen as a fundamental step (but not of itself sufficient) to open the doors of Guinea's schools to more girls, to keep them there, and to help them learn. The USAID program has pursued two strategies: 1) improving the overall system supply, quality, and capacity to respond to the needs of most Guinean children and 2) making the education system, services, and personnel respond to girls' particular needs.

Results of Education System Reforms In Guinea

Guinea has achieved one of the most successful education system restructurings in sub-Saharan Africa. The success of the government's efforts to expand and improve the supply of primary schooling can be measured by the extent of system-level changes, as well as in the impact on student enrollment, persistence, and achievement (see table 4).

Resource Allocation and Reallocation

Central to the PASE reforms—and financing their implementation—were the increase of public resources to the education sector and increases within the sector budget to primary education. By 1993 the education sector's share of the government budget had reached the targeted 26 percent (and this was being maintained), up from the 1989 low of 12 percent. The proportion of sector resources allocated to primary education grew from 30 percent in 1990–91 to 36 percent in 1993–94 and reached 38 percent in 1996–97. The nonsalary

recurrent education budget reached 28 percent in 1996. Per student nonsalary recurrent expenditures increased from less than $0.20 to $11 in 1993 and have been maintained at $6. During PASE I, these targets were achieved thanks to donor performance conditions—to which the release of nonproject assistance funds was tied. Education resources have been supplemented through an increase in community contributions to schooling, harnessed through specific programs and projects resulting in a boost in classroom construction and the assumption by communities of some recurrent costs such as teacher food allowances, student materials, and school building maintenance. Over the last few years, contributions have been generated spontaneously by the communities themselves. Local contributions—in cash and in kind—were estimated at $200,000 for PASE I and $2.3 million for PASE II, indicating increased support for and faith in the education system.

More Infrastructure

Greater financial resources have helped the government build or create more school places (classrooms with teachers) in areas that had previously lacked even rudimentary schools. Classroom construction has been a major feature of PASE I and II: during 1990–94, 1,900 additional classrooms were built and 1,000 more rehabilitated. The Guinean government continues to add about 600 each year. Most have been for rural areas, their strategic placement assisted by the new school mapping

Table 4. Essential System Reforms

	1990–91	1991–92	1992–93	1993–94	1994–95	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98
Education as Percent of Government Budget	14	26	25	26	23	28	26	27
Primary as Percent of Education Budget	30	35	35	36	39	36	38	39
Teachers Redeployed	—	200	1,800	593	NA	NA	NA	NA
Teachers Hired	8,699	7,374	8,577	9,718	11,658	11,875	13,234	13,883
—Female	1,957	1,554	2,004	2,184	2,832	2,990	3,281	3,405
Total Classrooms	7,606	8,415	9,272	10,443	11,154	12,087	13,836	14,904

Sources: Program Appraisal Amendment No. 3 (1993), Washington: USAID/Guinea 1993; *Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels Project Identification Document* (1994), Washington: USAID/Global Bureau/Women in Development Office; *Education Sector Reform Project Audit*, (1995); USAID/Guinea (1996–98), Results Review and Resource Request Reports, Washington; and *Données Statistiques d'Enseignement Primaire Année Scolaire* (1997–98), Conakry: Government of Guinea.

system. Lower construction costs and community contributions of up to 25 percent have optimized these resources.*

More Teachers

Guinea has been faced with a chronic shortage of teachers. In PASE I, it increased its teaching corps by redeploying more than 2,500 administrators and secondary school teachers back to primary school classrooms and reassigning many to rural areas. This potentially explosive action was executed without controversy owing to the activism and diplomacy of the minister of pre-university education, a 100 percent salary increase for teachers, and incentives for teachers sent to rural areas.† Currently, the government struggles to meet its target of 600 new teachers each year. In 1996, only 217 new teachers were hired, but the government intended to hire 1,600 new teachers in 1998 and renew the contracts of 1,000 other temporary teachers. It has expanded the intake capacity of its preservice facilities to 800 places and reduced the preservice program to one year from three in an effort to meet the annual 2,000 new teachers estimated to be needed to attain universal primary education by 2010.

More Schooling Options

To supplement government-run schools, MEPU has encouraged and experimented with other schooling options. Yielding to donors, the government eliminated stringent restrictions and requirements for official registration of private schools. At the beginning of the decade, fewer than a dozen private primary schools enrolled collectively fewer than 1,500 students. In 1996–97, about 24,000 (out of 25,000) new students added to the rolls of primary schools were enrolled in private schools,‡ most of them in urban centers and reportedly from wealthier families. Of all children enrolled in school, 12.7 percent of the girls attend private schools, compared with 9.3 percent of boys.§ Funded with grants from USAID, international private voluntary organizations are working with the government to create village-based community schools and strengthen local management by parent associations. And, with UNICEF assistance, the government has established a number of "second chance" schools to serve older children, mainly girls, who dropped out or never enrolled in primary school.

Better Qualified, Trained, And Supported Teachers

In PASE I, the government retrained 8,000 teachers, 111 education specialists, and 64 teacher training professors in French and mathematics. With PASE II, it has changed its primary-level teacher qualifications and training structure from brevet (10th grade) plus 3 years of teacher training to baccalaureate (12th grade) plus a year of teacher training and a year of a classroom practicum. The government is revising the process and content of its preservice and in-service teacher training programs.

Better Curriculum And More Instructional Materials

Early in the reform, the government developed new textbooks and produced 1.4 million of them. But the delivery of those and other instructional materials was confounded by an inadequate and corrupt distribution system.

*Communities have taken to heart the cost-sharing scheme for school construction, increasingly building schools with no government assistance in the hope that the government will provide teachers. This often occurs with no foreknowledge of MEPU planners.

†Precise numbers vary across sources, depending on whether administrators are included.

‡Severe problems with hiring that year constrained the government's ability to expand the teaching corps and open more classrooms.

§Guinean Statistics and Planning Unit. 1998. *Données Statistiques*. Conakry.

Although budgetary targets were met, much of the hefty $11 per student went to general equipment and school supplies, such as clocks and desks, rather than to instructional materials. Under PASE II, the primary school curriculum is being revised, the textbooks redesigned, and their procurement opened to competitive bidding. Concerned that its 2:1 student–book ratio policy would result in inequities for girls and poorer children, the government—at donor urging and with World Bank funding—adopted a 1:1 ratio.

Tracking Student Achievement

The government has developed criterion-referenced tests for grades 2 and 4 and is beginning work on grade 6. Previously, the major test at the primary level was the seventh-grade entry exam, which had no diagnostic value. Its test data are gender disaggregated.

Restructuring and Decentralizing The Education Ministry

One of the government's first acts was to create the Ministry of Pre-University Education and separate it from the Ministry of Education. This signaled commitment to primary education and protected resources allocated for primary levels. MEPU also decentralized many of its planning, management, and budgeting functions to regional, district, and subdistrict offices. Today, those offices conduct most of the data collection for the annual school census.

Rational Planning and Financial Systems

Not until 1988 did the Education (or any other) Ministry have a formal budget or execute any expenditure plan. MEPU was the first Guinean ministry to create a coordinated budget and accounting system to track line-item expenditures and reduce the heavy leakage of resources. MEPU quickly gained a reputation for clear and compelling budgeting practices. Resources for rural areas were specified and tracked. A mapping system rationalized the placement of schools to reduce the distances children had to travel. With USAID assistance, MEPU is now developing full-scale planning models to link estimated input needs with budgets. A steering committee oversees and coordinates efforts across MEPU departments and between the MEPU and donors.

Better Information Systems

Guinea now boasts one of the most robust educational management information systems in sub-Saharan Africa. USAID has assisted the Statistics and Planning Unit as it develops data collection instruments and procedures for an annual school census, a statistical handbook, and an analytic summary of the data that specifically address the issue of girls' education. MEPU has adopted the USAID-developed fundamental quality and equity framework to plan the education systems' expansion and assess its progress in providing better instructional services.

The Impact of Basic Education Reform on Girls and Boys

The systemic changes have altered the amount, type, and delivery of primary education in Guinea. Girls have benefited from the national educational reform; their participation has increased—and at a faster pace than boys. The gender gap remains significant, but for the first time since the mid-1970s it appears that gender disparities are starting to diminish in many respects.

Increased Access

The gross enrollment rate was projected to reach 55 percent in 1998, surpassing the 53 percent objective set by the government a

Table 5. Impact on Student Outcomes

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Gross Enrollment Rate									
Total	28.60	31.81	31.91	36.70	40.14	44.58	46.57	50.46	51.04
Girls	17.35	44.44	44.60	22.82	25.71	60.50	35.54	35.54	36.94
Boys	40.32	19.66	19.72	51.14	55.16	29.28	62.37	65.99	65.71
Girl:Boy Index	0.43	0.44	0.44	0.45	0.47	0.48	0.50	0.54	0.56
Rural	19.00	20.00	20.60	24.00	27.40	—	34.10	33.10	34.00
Gross Access Rate									
Total		22.90	34.80	47.00		58.72	55.60		
Girls		19.40	23.20	23.70			37.90		
Boys							63.70		
Rural		20.60	26.20	27.70			50.00		
6th Grade Attainment									
Total	31.30	60.60	60.30					82.60	67.70
Girls	24.00	46.40	57.00					66.80	56.90
Boys	34.40	68.20	89.20					91.20	73.30
Girl:Boy Index	0.70	0.68	0.64					0.73	0.78
7th Grade Exam Pass Rate									
Total	57.30	64.10		49.80	52.60			42.30	40.50
Girls	49.40	65.40		46.60	48.00			37.30	33.30
Boys	60.20	63.70		50.80	54.40			44.30	43.50
Girl:Boy Index	0.82	1.02		0.92	0.88			0.84	0.76

Sources: Juárez and Associates (1998), *Case Study: Girls' Education Efforts in Guinea: Education Sector Reform and Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels*. Washington: USAID/Global Bureau/Women in Development Office; Fiscal Years 1999 and 2000 Results Review and Resource Request Reports, Washington: USAID/Guinea; Karen Tietjen (1993–96), *Impact of USAID Basic Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa: Analysis of Results, Africa Bureau Presentations*; Guinean Statistics and Planning Unit (1998), *Données Statistiques*, Conakry.

decade earlier.* That rate, though still low, represents substantial growth in schooling since 1989, when Guinea's rate stood at 28 percent. The percentage of school-age children has nearly doubled, with the gross enrollment rate growing at more than 10 percent a year, exceeding population growth. The rural gross enrollment rate rose from less than 20 percent in 1989 to 34 percent in 1997. The tremendous surge in enrollments is reflected in the portion of school-age population in first grade, which peaked at 59 percent in 1994. As was expected, this appears to be leveling off. But the percentage of 7-year-olds in the population enrolled in first grade has also increased, indicating that more of the age-appropriate group is enrolling.

*See Guinean Statistics and Planning Unit (1997) *Annual Report*. The World Bank provided the 1998 estimate.

The percentage of girls enrolled in primary school rose from less than 18 percent in 1989 to 37 percent in 1997, a 105 percent increase, compared with a 65 percent increase in the boy's gross enrollment rate. Growing at 16 percent annually, girls' education in Guinea ranks first among all other African countries for sustained growth. Boys' enrollments also are growing, though at less than 10 percent a year. The disparity index (girls' gross enrollment rate divided by boys' gross enrollment rate, with 1.00 representing parity) moved from 0.43 in 1989 to 0.56 in the 1997–98 school year. Yet, because of the low baseline girls' enrollment rate in 1989, the gender gap actually increased over the same period—from 23 to 29 points. Now that more than 45 percent of the children in first grade are girls, improvements in equity should be sustained. A comparison of the net access rate for 7-year-olds shows that the sexes are nearly comparable, although late enrollment is still a problem for both groups.

Table 6 shows regional disparities that continue to characterize girls' enrollment in Guinea despite increases in rural girls' enrollments.* Girls' gross enrollment rates in 1997 ranged from a low of 24 percent in Upper and Middle Guinea, to a high of 66 percent in urban Conakry.

Table 6. Gross Enrollment Rate By Region, 1997–98

Region	Boys	Girls	Index
Conakry	86%	66%	0.77
Forest Guinea	73%	35%	0.48
Maritime Guinea	71%	35%	0.49
Upper Guinea	58%	24%	0.41
Middle Guinea	48%	24%	0.50
Total	66%	36%	0.56

Declining Student Performance

The percentage of children passing the seventh grade exam fell from 57 percent in 1989 to 41 percent in 1997, though it appears that a greater percentage of the sixth graders are sitting for the exam. As the pool of children taking the exam expands, so does the proportion of less qualified students sitting for it. The seventh-grade entry exam pass rate for girls has also fallen since 1989. Only 33 percent of girls who sit for the exam succeed, while 44 percent of boys pass. The 1998 results of the new second-grade criterion-referenced exam show that even at this early stage, girls do not perform at the same level as boys. It is clear from the gender-disaggregated student outcomes that the education playing field was not level at the beginning of the national education reform, nor is it now. Girls as young as age 8 are already falling behind boys in learning achievement.

GIRLS' EDUCATION INITIATIVES: INCREASING GIRLS' ACCESS TO SCHOOLING

National education reform in Guinea was intended to benefit all children—girls as well as boys. It shifted resource allocation to the primary schooling level and emphasized services to rural communities. The government included the specific goal of increasing girls' educational participation in its sector policy, although when USAID arrived on the education scene in 1990 the government had not yet developed a strategy to achieve gender equity.

*See the USAID/Guinea fiscal year 1999 Results Review and Resource Request.

Box 2. USAID Gender-Related Performance Conditions

Evidence that the grantee has

- Prepared plans specifying targets for 1) training, retraining, and redeploying teachers and 2) school rehabilitation and construction that are consistent with USAID's gender equity objectives (first disbursement).
- Conducted a study to be funded by the technical assistance component of the grant, to determine the factors involved in household decisions to enroll children in primary schools, and developed a plan to address constraints at national and regional levels to the enrollment of children in rural areas and girls (second disbursement).
- Acted on its equity plan and prepared a national plan that identifies specific strategies, interventions, and programs to increase girls' and rural children's educational participation and incorporates the more precise information derived from both the awareness campaign and the action-research project. It will contain verifiable targets (fourth disbursement, added by amendment).

The USAID education program design was unique among the original PASE donors' support programs in 1989 for including a girls' education component and addressing gender issues in its performance conditions. Stimulated by USAID conditionality, technical assistance, and funding, the government embarked on developing a program and implementing activities to improve girls' education.

USAID Support For Girls' Education in Guinea

Confronted with the Africa Bureau mandate to use the new "program" approach centering on nonproject assistance and conditionality, the 1990 USAID education program design team was unsure how to meet the Agency's new gender equity objectives.[1] The team was concerned that anticipated increases in reform-induced enrollments might hurt girls' participation by flooding the system with new entrants, most of them boys. The program therefore stipulated in its end-of-project indicators that a minimum girls' participation rate of 33 percent be maintained. Little data and no empirical analysis of girls' education in Guinea existed at the time, and a week-long field visit by the USAID gender specialist resulted in one of the first analyses of girls' educational status in Guinea.[2] Despite the general lack of enthusiasm and attention that greeted USAID's equity concerns, girls' education and its support were included as an integral component in the USAID Education Sector Reform project.

USAID/Guinea's determination that all education reform be government led—coupled with its uncertainty about how to support girls' education (a new endeavor) in a new country with little baseline data using a new modality, nonproject assistance—is reflected in the Education Sector Reform design. A detailed action plan was not specified, but

[1] Karen Tietjen. 1996. *Educating Girls in Sub-Saharan Africa: USAID's Approach and Lessons for Donors.* Washington: USAID.

[2] Lynellyn D. Long and Hawah Fofanah. 1990. *Study of Girls' Access to Primary Schooling in Guinea.* Washington: USAID.

conditionalities and technical assistance were programmed to create a clearer picture of the problem and to organize government interest and support.

That deliberative approach aimed to help the ministry create a national strategy to improve girls' education. Girls' education was addressed in some of the performance conditions (see box 2), but specific interventions were not prescribed a priori. Instead, USAID's conditions stressed that equity be considered in major reform actions (teacher training and redeployment, school construction) and that an analytical information base be created to plan how to best support girls' education. The performance conditions were buttressed by projectized resources from USAID—first in the form of short-term technical assistance and studies, later by PL 480 funds to implement specific interventions. Future Education Sector Reform project amendments were to escalate requirements, as MEPU's mastery of and commitment to the issue progressed.

The Guinean government sailed through its first disbursement review, having met the rigorous resource reallocation conditions and the vaguely worded "consistency with USAID gender equity objectives" condition. However, as review of the more precise equity conditions for the second disbursement neared, both MEPU and USAID were forced to treat the equity issue more seriously. That condition required MEPU to conduct a study of the factors inhibiting educational participation of rural children and girls and to develop an action plan. The conditions USAID imposed put girls' education on the agenda, directed ministry attention to this issue, and led to the creation of a mechanism for promoting and supporting girls' education.

USAID conditions specified results, not actions, nor organizational mechanisms for their development. The definition of the girls' education support program and the mechanisms for its implementation were left up to MEPU. As a direct result of the USAID conditions, MEPU created an interministerial working group on equity, known as the Equity Committee. Its function as an advocacy group, along with its efforts to increase the knowledge base and awareness of girls' education, have discernibly improved the education of girls in the eight districts selected as pilot zones for girls' education initiatives.

Although the members of the Equity Committee were experienced and enthusiastic educators, they knew little at first about girls' education. With USAID-provided technical assistance to guide it, the committee quickly pulled together a creditable analysis of the problems confronting girls and rural children in the sector and proposed a plan for in-depth research.

USAID was joined by the World Bank in funding a series of investigative studies, conducted under the purview of the Equity Committee. The Agency also provided the committee with PL 480 funds to conduct an awareness campaign. The money, about $435,000, financed a variety of activities as part of the publicity campaign. Not only did they pay for implementation activities (commissioning media treatment, hiring local animators, providing prizes), but they also financed Equity Committee members' trips to look at USAID girls' education programs abroad. A media consultant was hired to assist the Equity Committee. The minister in charge of pre-university education (MEPU had not yet been created), Aicha Bah, a highly respected educator, became one of the leading proponents of girls' education in Africa.

In 1994, with additional nonproject assistance funds added to the Education Sector Reform

project, USAID introduced another condition: MEPU was to consolidate information from the various studies and its experience with the publicity campaign into a national strategy. USAID's second support program, the Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels project, was designed to integrate gender concerns in all MEPU activities.

In 1996, USAID/Guinea bought into the centrally funded Girls' and Women's Education project. The GWE project aims to broaden the support base for girls' education by mobilizing the business, religious, and other private sector communities to lobby for and finance girls' education. Working through a locally based private voluntary organization, the project has helped create a national working group on girls' education, with a wide range of influential members. It is now helping this group develop its support strategy.

Since the advent of the Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels activity, USAID's support of MEPU capacity building for girls' education has lagged. The use of the Girls' and Women's Education project, while broadening the vision of girls' education, has complicated coordination, and the GWE subcontractor lacks the expertise needed by the ministry. Use of two different contracting mechanisms and two different contractors has separated girls' education from the mainstream of MEPU operations and from other USAID education support activities in planning, curriculum and materials development, and teacher training and support.

The Girls' and Women's Education activity deals only with girls' education, while PASE also aims to assist all rural children. GWE has brought its own girls' education agenda and approach, which—as implemented—has not been totally consistent with that of the FQEL. Because it works with so many private and public sector stakeholders in Guinea, the Girls' and Women's Education project has tended to treat MEPU as one of many actors and has not addressed building its capacity or ensuring that the public sector policy framework supports girls. It has not yet provided the assistance to realize the mission's vision set forth in the USAID/Guinea fiscal year 1999 Results Review and Resource Request, which claimed

> USAID and [MEPU] activities take into account equity and gender considerations in every aspect of education (curriculum design, instructional materials, teacher training, and classroom management and practices) in their efforts to raise primary school enrollment and completion.

The lack of technical assistance has left a vacuum. The Equity Committee—as the entity responsible for girls' education—has turned to other donors for technical and material support. The effectiveness and relevance of the Girls' and Women's Education activity may improve, since it was in only its third year as this Impact Evaluation was headed for publication.

The Equity Committee

The Equity Committee was originally seen as a short-lived body. Thus it did not figure on the official organizational chart, did not have an operating budget, was not endowed with policymaking authority, and had even less jurisdiction over resources and decisions than would typically be the case for Women in Development or gender units. Despite this, its status and ability to effect change was enhanced by the interest and support of the education minister, the leadership of the secretary general (the second-ranking official of MEPU), and the membership of several other senior MEPU officials from various MEPU offices. Another committee member was from the Ministry of Social Affairs, which deals with women's and children's issues.

As the portfolio of girls' education activities grew to meet and surpass the USAID conditions, the Equity Committee became the de facto locus for planning and management. The influx of PL 480 funds for the USAID-supported awareness campaign gave the committee an operating budget and quasi-official standing within MEPU. It assumed an advisory role to the steering committee and MEPU on equity issues. The committee became a focal point for policy analysis and proposal review on gender. It remains the entity to which donors turn for advice and implementation of girls' education studies and interventions, notwithstanding that the committee nominally has only one full-time position (a permanent secretariat).

From 1991 to 1995, most of the Equity Committee's actions were influenced by the push–pull effect of USAID conditionality and funding, which encouraged MEPU to review its policy framework in light of equity issues and then undertook to finance the interventions identified. But the committee also enjoyed the growing visibility of the girls' education issue in Guinea and throughout Africa and support from the minister of pre-university education. Minister Bah became a founding member of the Forum for African Women Educationists. The domestic spillover effect of Bah's international visibility as a forum spokeswoman brought national attention to girls' education and the Equity Committee's efforts.

The most visible activities in girls' education of both the Equity Committee and MEPU are those that enhance demand; they are calculated to increase the demand for and support of girls' education from a variety of constituents. The USAID-sponsored awareness campaign was a centerpiece of the Equity Committee agenda from 1992 through 1995. The committee (rather than develop policies and other programs to deal with the still unaddressed barriers to girls' enrollment or work with line offices within MEPU to improve the classroom environment) has since sought to continue the awareness campaign to exhort parents to send their girls to school, despite the inability of the system to keep up with demand.

During the first phase of PASE, the Equity Committee served as the institutional mechanism to build MEPU's girls' education support package. But in recent years, as MEPU has been in structural flux, the fragility and limitations of the Equity Committee have been exposed. Its informal status as an advisory board and lack of budget portfolio meant that its influence depends on the status and involvement of its members, and its actions on the interest and resources of external donors. The departure of both the supportive minister and secretary general, who used their official powers to effect change, reveals how tenuous the committee's linkages are to the policy- and decision-making process. Having enjoyed the sympathetic ear of the former minister, the Equity Committee has not since moved to cultivate its outreach to and negotiating powers with the MEPU offices that control day-to-day operations, services, and budgets, and thus hold the potential for the greatest impact on girls' education.

Although girls' education is part of the general discourse, few office heads within MEPU consider girls' education their departments' responsibility. The Equity Committee's high visibility has convinced PASE management that girls' education is being dealt with adequately. Yet there is no line item in the budget for girls' education.

The Reform Process

Policy Reforms

The Ministry of Pre-University Education at first needed to understand the scope of the girls' educational participation problem and the factors affecting it. It needed to build an

information base on which to build a girls' education strategy.

The Equity Committee oversaw two seminal studies on girls' education. The *Orientation Study* (1992) assembled and synthesized existing data on girls and rural children, reviewed past and existing government programs to support girls' education, and outlined a plan of action toward developing MEPU's girls' education strategy. This led to a second study, *Educational Demand of Girls and Rural Children* (1994), which used surveys and focus group interviews with parents, children, school personnel, and religious and community leaders to identify constraints and develop viable solutions. Its emphasis on economic constraints and its recommendation that social leaders be asked to support girls' education framed the awareness campaign. Minister Bah invited an external Forum for African Women Educationists team to undertake an additional study. Unfortunately, collectively the studies led only to tentative plans by the Equity Committee, not to a national girls' education strategy. (A goal of USAID's Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels activity was to help the Equity Committee develop a strategy.)

The ministry undertook two major policy reforms to address schoolgirl pregnancy and school sanitation facilities. On the advice of the Equity Committee and FAWE, the minister in 1992 revised the pregnancy policy to allow all school-age mothers, regardless of marital status, to return to school following the birth of a child. Minister Bah visited communities and met with religious leaders to garner support. While the reform had tremendous symbolic value in signaling a new educational environment for girls, its impact in real terms was questionable. The percentage of girls in primary school who were forced to leave school because of pregnancy was less than 5 percent. The Statistics and Planning Unit reports that 66 percent of girls (most of them at the secondary level) who became pregnant have returned to school, although methodological problems complicate analysis. Still, many rural communities have complained that school directors do not adhere to this policy and that, against policy mandate, the responsible boy has not been similarly suspended from school. Moreover, they note that schools do little to help girls avoid pregnancy—an area of potential follow-through for the Equity Committee.*

The World Bank took note of the need for latrines in schools and negotiated with MEPU to include them in construction models and reallocate some of its school construction budget to retrofit existing schools with the facilities.

The ministry rejected other areas for policy change identified in the studies. For example, the expense of complying with a school uniform requirement has consistently been raised as a barrier to girls' and rural children's enrollment. The ministry has refused to drop the dress code, arguing that it is necessary to school order and discipline.

Institutional Reforms

MEPU recognized the positive influence of female teachers on girls' enrollments and recruited more women and girls as teachers and teacher trainees. Through redeployment, the ministry increased the portion of female teachers from 18 percent in 1990 to 23 percent in 1994 and 24.5 percent in 1998. Since 1991 the female teaching corps has grown at an annual rate of 10 percent, compared with 7 percent for men. In 1998, 25 percent of the teacher trainees were female. Minister Bah also instituted the goal of assigning at least one female school

*See Karen Tietjen. 1998. *Intervention Options for Promoting Primary Schooling in Guinea*. USAID Girls' and Women's Education Project. Washington.

director per district. Many districts now boast women primary school directors, and three district education chiefs are women. But there is some concern that this has been used mainly for political purposes.

Instructional Reforms

In 1994 the World Bank commissioned a third study—*The Experience of Girls in Guinea's Classrooms*—to get a better sense of what happens to girls in school once their parents decide to enroll them.* Bank officials hoped the study would inform the development of the teacher training program. Neither the preservice nor the in-service teacher training program has yet incorporated gender modules into its curriculum.

Recently, MEPU's pedagogical office has acted on earlier Equity Committee recommendations and USAID initiatives to examine curricula, textbooks, and instructional materials for gender bias. Despite their suggestions to delete or emend certain references, the curricula and textbooks remain unchanged.

The Consciousness-Raising Campaign

The Sensitization Campaign, the first program activity undertaken by the Equity Committee, was funded by USAID/Guinea through PL 480 funds. This was an effort to raise awareness among parents, educators, and community leaders about the value of girls' education. The campaign operated both at the national level and in eight districts as pilot projects. The $435,000 USAID provided during September 1993 through April 1995 constituted the entire funding for the effort. Activities included the production of songs, dramas, radio and television broadcasts, and competitions with prizes for outstanding schoolgirls. Since the entire country was blanketed with media coverage, it is difficult to distinguish the effect of the national campaign from the PASE and other reform efforts aimed at girls.

The Sensitization Campaign Pilot Project

The most innovative aspect of the Sensitization Campaign was its employment of *promoteurs éducatifs* (education promoters) in two pilot districts from each of the four regions (exclusive of Conakry). The eight districts were selected on the basis of their having the lowest overall enrollment of girls within their regions. Girls' gross enrollment rates in the pilot zones in 1992 averaged only 11 percent, compared with 23 percent for the country as a whole and 20 percent for the nonpilot districts outside of Conakry. The initial plan was to have one female and one male promoter per pilot district, but most of the pilot districts lacked women with the local prominence and connections to be effective in the role. Ultimately, most of the girls' education promoters were men. Most had standing as local religious leaders.

The promoters were paid a modest salary of 100,000 Guinean francs (about US$100) a month for the two years of the project. (By comparison, a beginning primary school teacher earns about $135 a month.†) The promoters' monthly reports to the Equity Committee—which continue to come from many districts nearly three years after the paid positions ended—attest to the promoters' energy and creativity. Their visits to households, schools, and mosques to spread the message about girls' education led to stronger bonds between communities and their schools. The promoters also used mechanisms created by the Equity Committee, such as local competitions, drama, and rural radio broadcasts.

*See Katherine Anderson-Leavitt, Mimi Bloch, and Aminata Miaga. 1994. *Dans les Classes en Guinée: L'Expérience des Filles*. Washington: World Bank.

†Guinea's Financial Management Unit.

The Impact of The Sensitization Campaign Pilot Project

The impact of the Sensitization Campaign in the eight pilot districts is evident in a comparison of the data on girls' enrollment for the 1992–93 school year (one year before the campaign) with those of the 1996–97 school year (one year after the campaign concluded). Throughout this period, girls' and boys' enrollments in primary education rose steadily, with the total number of schoolchildren increasing by 54 percent nationwide and the growth in girls' enrollment rates outstripping boys'. Nonetheless, the enrollment of boys relative to girls, or the gender gap (as measured by percentage point differences), increased slightly, as shown in table 7.

Table 7. Girls' and Boys' Gross Enrollments, 1992 and 1996

	1992	1996	Change
Girls	23%	36%	56%
Boys	51%	66%	29%
Gender Gap	28	30	7%

In striking contrast to the national pattern, the gender gap in pilot districts dropped dramatically in the period from 1992 through 1996, as shown in table 8. The first pair of columns shows the absolute value of the gender gap in 1996, as the boys' minus the girls' gross enrollment rate. The second pair of columns shows the percent change in the gender gap since 1992. A plus sign indicates that the gap increased, a minus sign that it decreased.

The change in the gender gap in pilot districts, though low for Forest Guinea and less than 1 percent in Maritime Guinea, differs at a statistically significant level from gender gap changes in nonpilot districts—even in capital Conakry, where overall enrollment is the highest and the gender gap is the lowest in the country.

Changes in enrollment data and the declining gender gap show not a reduction in boys' enrollment but rather extraordinary expansion of girls' enrollment. Table 9 shows the percent increase in gross enrollment rates for boys and girls, in pilot and nonpilot zones. Girls' and boys' enrollments increased more rapidly in

Table 8. Changes in Gender Gap, Between 1992 and 1996

	Gender Gap, 1996		Change in Gap Since 1992	
Region	Pilot	Nonpilot	Pilot	Nonpilot
Conakry	—	20	—	–25%
Forest Guinea	34	41	–6%	+10%
Middle Guinea	28	36	–17%	+11%
High Guinea	28	36	–58%	+32%
Maritime Guinea	17	26	0%	+9%
Nationwide	27	34	–20%	+9%

Table 9. Percentage Increases in Boys' and Girls' Gross Enrollment Rates, 1992 to 1996

	Boys' Increase		Girls' Increase	
	Pilot	Nonpilot	Pilot	Nonpilot
Conakry	—	2	—	13
Forest Guinea	22	17	59	57
Middle Guinea	38	45	77	70
High Guinea	68	47	88	76
Maritime Guinea	36	28	97	65
Nationwide	41	30	80	58

pilot than nonpilot zones (except for boys in Middle Guinea), though the differences in rates of increase between pilot and nonpilot zones were not statistically significant for either gender.

Changing the Cultural Context Of Girls' Schooling

When first presented with those figures, some members of the Equity Committee expressed disbelief that the Sensitization Campaign could have had such distinct effects in the pilot zones. There had, after all, also been an extensive national social marketing effort (supported by USAID) to support girls' education. In financial terms, direct support of the promoters amounted to less than 10 percent of Sensitization Campaign expenditures, and the gifts and incentives distributed were also low cost. Yet it is rare to see such quantitatively marked differences associated with a programmatic intervention in education. While the search for ancillary factors that might account for differences between pilot and nonpilot zones should not be abandoned,* the CDIE evaluation team's visit to one pilot site suggested that these results might be explained by the work of the education promoters.

Earlier studies in Guinea identified widespread negative beliefs about educating girls. Parents spoke of the harmful moral effects of schooling (making girls proud and turning them away from religion) and of a common belief that girls simply are not as important as boys, nor as intelligent. Discussions with parents and teachers at four schools in the Lélouma district told quite a different story. Not only did parents *not* retain those negative views, they came to believe the opposite. Parents repeatedly expressed the belief that educated girls were better wives and mothers and more observant Muslims. Moreover, parents and teachers claimed that the past few years had shown them that many girls performed better than most boys.

One reason for the depth of the discourse around girls' education was the credibility and influence of the promoters. On a field visit to

*The relatively low growth in boys' enrollment in Middle Guinea suggests that a phenomenon common to some southern African and South American regions may be at work. In this situation, high labor migration by young men (to mines or factories) greatly increases the opportunity costs of schooling for boys, depressing their educational participation.

Lélouma, the CDIE team was privileged to be invited to a Koranic school led by one of Lélouma's promoters. At a meeting of male elders during the first week of Ramadan, the team watched an educational promoter call attention to a passage from scripture describing the fundamental Islamic beliefs in the equal value of women and men and the importance for all of learning. A reading of the promoters' monthly reports reveals that this message and its implications were discussed repeatedly, widely, and in depth. The result, it appears, has been a profound appreciation of girls' education.

The sustained work of the promoters has forged closer bonds between the local schools and the communities they serve. The schools visited received significant support from surrounding communities. Communities built schools, paid teacher salaries, and provided teachers with housing and other amenities. The promoters and teachers interviewed were reflective about gender equity. One teacher asked the Equity Committee director for advice on ways to promote equity among her students. At another site, the teachers had already determined that school-based chores and activities would not be gender differentiated.

CHALLENGES TO GIRLS' EDUCATION

Girls' education in Guinea, ironically, could fall victim to its own success. There are three major challenges to maintaining improvements in girls' education: 1) meeting the demand created (or released) by the awareness campaign, 2) responding appropriately to the influx of donors who wish to be part of Guinea's successful reform effort, and 3) overcoming the Ministry of Pre-University Education's satisfaction with its initial efforts on behalf of girls.

Tensions Between Supply and Demand

The girls' awareness campaign and publicity about PASE have boosted household demand for girls' education. The danger now facing Guinean girls and boys is that supply might not meet demand. For several years, there have been more classrooms than teachers in Guinea. This is particularly so in the countryside. In 1996–97, the number of classrooms (8,197) far exceeded the number of teachers (6,813) in rural areas. In contrast, in urban areas the supply of teachers (6,421) is greater than the supply of classrooms (5,639). While double shifts have been used to deal with this constraint in urban areas, many rural classrooms go unused.

The supply of teachers continues to be a critical barrier to expanding primary schooling in Guinea. From 1992 to 1996, the primary teaching force expanded 54 percent, from 8,577 to 13,234. That increase is partly attributable to the redeployment of primary teaching that took place between 1992 and 1995, and more recently, to the hiring of contract teachers, financed by the Fonds Européen de Développement and required under the World Bank Equity and School Improvement project. Over the next decade, an additional 2,000 teachers will be needed annually to maintain the pace of expansion. Universal primary enrollment will require many more teachers—and a greater recurrent budget—than is currently being contemplated.* After years of parents keeping children out of school,

*If all children began primary school on time, none repeated, population continued growing at 2.8 percent a year, and the student–teacher ratio remained at 50 to 1, then a total of 33,498 teachers would be required to provide universal primary education in 2006—a near tripling of the teacher force. With current starting salaries for teachers of about US$1,620 per year, 20,000 additional teachers would cost about US$32 million per year. (World Bank. 1995. Equity *and School Improvement Project [Guinea]: Staff Appraisal Report*. Washington.)

communities now contribute facilities, food, and materials to schools and teachers. But community resources are limited. If the supply of school places cannot meet the demand for them, disillusionment is bound to follow—and with disillusionment, a setback for girls' education.

The Fragile Girls' Education Support Mechanism

The enthusiasm, activities, and climate of support for girls' education have not yet been translated into a coherent national Ministry of Pre-University Education strategy. Despite initial efforts to build a sound analytic foundation for girls' education through research studies, MEPU's girls' education portfolio remains a potpourri of activities not strategically linked. Many of the actions are piecemeal and isolated. Few have received the required follow-through to realize their potential.

A laudable characteristic of the government's development of its PASE effort was the careful consideration given to its potential impact. When MEPU realized that its budget envelope would not permit the higher level of enrollments it desired, it chose to reduce its target rather than the unit expenditure. That sort of deliberation does not appear to have been applied to its girls' education efforts, as witnessed by the continued pursuit of an awareness campaign despite the supply shortages under which it labors. Further, the girls' education efforts have not been integrated into the mainstream of the ministry's routine operations yet; instead, they remain within the Equity Committee.

Recent years have exposed the fragility and limitations of the Equity Committee as it is currently structured. Because it is without official status, its influence—in the absence of a supportive minister—is limited. Except for the coordinator, committee members have outside duties, limiting the time and energy they can devote to girls' education. Absent a government appropriation, the committee depends on donors for its resources. With donor funds come donor programs and agendas that could undermine the development and implementation of a coherent and sustainable strategy for girls' education.

The multitude of actors now involved in girls' education increases the likelihood of duplication of effort and competition for resources. The weak and vulnerable structure of the Equity Committee does not ensure efficient use of resources or that the supply-side challenges attendant to educating all of Guinea's children will be met.

The Diminishing Effectiveness Of MEPU's Education Program

The Ministry of Pre-University Education, through its Equity Committee, continues to define its girls' education program as augmenting the demand for schooling by raising public awareness about the benefits of educating girls. In the early stages of the PASE this was particularly successful because, given the low levels of enrollment, the ministry's message reached parents who were probably already predisposed to enrolling their daughters in school but whose wishes had been blocked by the lack of school supply. Providing school places and informing parents that their children were welcome was sufficient to attract the early acceptors. But as enrollment rates increase, the demand will be absorbed, leaving out of school only those children who are more vulnerable and harder to reach.

For such children, particularly girls, there are many more barriers to educational participation than merely the lack of an available school place. The model of schooling offered by the government is traditional. It has

changed little to meet demand considerations (except for school placement). The current girls' education program has yet to address demand-side constraints, such as household labor and poverty, in any sustainable way, such as with schedule and calendar flexibility. Many girls—and rural children—may never enroll in school unless the supply is reformulated to meet some of the unique or more severe factors that shape their ability to participate. The symbolic and visible effort of MEPU to increase girls' educational opportunities must be broadened and deepened.

While more must be done to ensure that an increasing proportion of girls can enroll in school, the Ministry of Pre-University Education must also ensure that the factors affecting persistence and achievement are also addressed. Although PASE II has added quality improvements to its agenda, there is little evidence yet of quality improvements for girls. Revisions to the curriculum and textbooks to remove gender biases have been reported, but little else has been done to make the school environment more welcoming (beyond installing latrines). MEPU could provide teacher sensitization or training in girl-friendly pedagogy and classroom management techniques. The new student assessment system, a major accomplishment, reveals that second-grade girls' skill levels have already fallen behind boys. MEPU must develop programs to redress these discrepancies before the gap widens further.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Basic education reform, coupled with girl-specific polices and programs, is a powerful strategy for improving girls' educational participation. In Guinea, the first increases in girls' enrollments in primary school predated activities specifically aimed at them. Rather, they coincided with the national reform effort. Expanding and improving primary education is essential to increasing girls' educational participation, because most girls currently in school are in the early grades. Education reform programs redirect public resources to primary education and strengthen the systems to deliver primary education services. The fewer the school places, the less likely that girls will succeed in the competition for those scarce places.

To sustain gains in girls' participation, basic education reform efforts (resource allocation, system expansion, and institutional strengthening) that can lay the groundwork for increasing girls' education must be integrated with policies and programs specifically crafted to strengthen demand for (and eliminate obstacles to) girls' participation.

2. A unified message and activist leadership are critical to increasing girls' education. Enrollments accelerated three years into PASE, once MEPU began its awareness campaign to encourage parents to send their daughters to primary school and instituted policies to heighten their confidence that their daughters were welcome there. Moreover, the intensified campaign in the eight pilot districts using local educational promoters resulted in a 20 percent *reduction* in the gender gap over four years, compared with the 9 percent nationwide *increase*. Girls' and boys' enrollment rates rose in the pilot districts.

Strong statements by the minister of pre-university education about the importance of educating girls served to capture the attention of education personnel and the public during the first phase of PASE. Minister Bah not only directed her staff to improve girls' educational opportunities, but she also made frequent forays to villages to meet with community and religious leaders and parents. These visits raised interest and awareness and lessened the potential for resistance to new policies. But a minister's support endures only long as she stays in office. The Guinean government

must now translate Bah's interest into institutionalized policy and mechanisms to ensure that the structure for supporting girls' education is maintained.

3. Baseline assessment and analysis are requirements for gender-aware policy and program design. The best intentions for improving girls' education cannot be fully realized unless information is gathered and assessed. The initial studies on barriers to girls' schooling provided the Equity Committee and the steering committee with valuable information, as they considered policy and program options. The Equity Committee could not have selected its pilot districts so well without first knowing that they represented districts with the lowest enrollment of girls, nor could the impact of the local Sensitization Campaign be known without such data. Teacher hiring and deployment in support of girls' and boys' education cannot be undertaken without a clear understanding of the distribution of children and the teaching force. Educational and budgetary information are critical inputs for informing policies and programs to enhance girls' education.

4. A coherent education policy and investment framework must be applied to girls' education initiatives. A single policy, such as building schools without an adequate supply of teachers, is unlikely to result in long-term community confidence in the education system or to increase girls' educational participation. Most policies must be supported with programs and other policies. Demand stimulation must be coupled with developing the supply to meet the demand—in this case, school places. Liberalizing the pregnancy policy, while sending a powerful signal, will not keep girls from getting pregnant and dropping out of school—such prevention being the real policy objective. Eliminating negative images of girls from textbooks will do little to improve girls' performance or self-esteem if teachers are not taught to eliminate discriminatory practices in the classroom.

5. Change is local. It is extremely difficult to ascertain the specific effects of national campaigns to change attitudes and behaviors, such as the nationwide Sensitization Campaign. Those who supported that campaign are certain it has raised the level of awareness about girls' schooling nationwide. But the measurable impact of the local-level pilot project using educational promoters underscores the local nature of attitudes toward gender roles. Face-to-face dialog with respected community members on the topic of girls' education, over an extended period, generated compelling results, at low cost.

Communities will support schools they trust, and send their girls to them. The Sensitization Campaign promoters did not explicitly intend to involve the community in education. Community involvement was a by-product of the dialog the promoters generated.

6. A hybrid of conditionality and projectized support was effective in putting girls' education on the agenda. Through this approach, USAID was able to draw the Ministry of Pre-University Education's attention to the issue of girls' education and help it develop its program. Without the use of performance conditions for girls' education, it is unlikely that such high-level attention would have been paid to the issue. That a $6 million disbursement depended on certain conditions showed that USAID was serious about girls' education and that the government should be likewise. The Agency allowed MEPU to define the problem of poor access to education and identify the solutions. By offering PL 480 funds for the awareness campaign, USAID inadvertently structured the MEPU girls' education program and truncated policy analysis, with both

positive and negative consequences. It may have contributed to the view of the Equity Committee and MEPU that girls' education is an off-budget, donor-funded activity.

7. Sustained, integrated support is necessary to consolidate the early efforts of MEPU in girls' education. Despite the potential of USAID's Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels project and Girls' and Women's Education project launched in 1997,* girls' education at the ministry seems to have fallen through the cracks. If girls' education is to be integrated into MEPU operations, USAID's technical assistance teams need to integrate their assistance. Thus far there has been little reported action on curriculum and teacher training. As the first donor on the girls' education scene and the one MEPU turns to for guidance on the subject, it is important that USAID continue the work it began. The Agency needs a coherent strategy and action plan with MEPU.

8. Simultaneous efforts to improve quality and enhance equity are needed. Girls' poor achievement compared with boys' suggests that some quality problems in the schools are gender linked and that girls suffer more negative effects from poor quality than boys do. Moreover, over the long term, poor quality will dampen demand and restrict girls' access to school. In Guinea, where just slightly more than half the children are in school, demand must be nurtured and rewarded. For Guinea to sustain and accelerate the remarkable gains it has achieved, it must run an efficient primary education system. High repetition and dropout rates are inevitable outcomes of poor quality and serious obstacles to an efficient system. To sustain sectoral investments and the impressive gains in girls' participation, the supply of education designed to meet girls' needs must continue to increase, and quality problems in Guinea's schools must be addressed more forcefully.

*The Fundamental Quality and Equity project, launched in 1997, brings USAID into close contact with the teacher formation and curriculum development scene in Guinea. At the same time, the Women in Development/Washington Girls' and Women's Education project brings together public and private actors with the emphasis on girls' education. These two programs together create a powerful potential for infusing curricula and practice with gender awareness.

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